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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION: OBAMA'S TRANS-PACIFIC
ENGAGEMENT

¶1. SUMMARY: Nepal's state-owned English daily the Rising Nepal (estimated circulation of 5,000) on Friday, December 11, 2009 published an opinion piece by an academician where the writer analyzes U.S. engagement in the Trans-Pacific region. Dr. Upendra Gautam, an engineer by profession, in the piece "U.S. in Nepal's neighborhood" states that United States needs to tread carefully in the region so as not to annoy the two rising powers - India or China. The writer praises President Obama for his pragmatic approach and his recognition of China as America's

most important bilateral partner of 21st century. The article predicts that President Obama 'may be successful in his South Asian initiative if his administration does not repeat the unforgivable mistake of previous administration.'

SELECTED EXCERPTS:

¶2. "...By preferring to call himself the first "Pacific President" of the US, he has raised America's neighborly standing vis--vis Asia... Obama, after his rise to the US presidency, has been a fast learner of Trans-Pacific affairs. His keen aptitude for the region turned him into a "pragmatist" much before he visited China (November 15-18, 2009). US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's China visit early this year definitely played a role in preparing the ground for a new era of pragmatic cooperation in Trans-Pacific relations."

¶3. "Not everyone has been happy with Obama and his unconventionally inclusive and non-partisan approach. One of those unhappy persons was Man Mohan Singh, the Indian prime minister. Singh's government was particularly not happy with the reference to South Asia made in the Joint Statement that was published in Beijing on November 17 at the fag-end of Obama's China visit."

¶4. "... Indian anger and disappointment caused by the Sino-US Joint Statement prevailed so much over Singh that he even chose to ignore that his country's bilateral ties with China were officially based on the principle of peaceful co-existence. Singh could not directly criticize host Obama for the Sino-US Joint Statement. So by way of tactics, he had to goad and demean a country with which Obama considered having the most important bilateral relations of the 21st century."

¶5. "Unforgivable mistake: To what extent Singh realizes his strategic objective is anybody's guess at this moment. What is sure for now is Obama will have to unwaveringly

play his pragmatic Trans-Pacific role with inclusive and non-partisan vision and accomplished skills. He may be successful in his South Asian initiative to a larger extent if his administration does not repeat the unforgivable mistake of the previous US administration in Iraq, which the US attacked and occupied for having imaginary 'weapon of mass destruction.' These times are certainly neither like the Iraq one nor that of World War II."

BERRY